MONTEREY NEWS

February 2011
VOLUME XLI · Number 2

The Town

By Sue Protheroe

Telecommunications Bylaw

Over forty people crowded into Town Hall on Tuesday, January 25, to hear the Planning Board review the changes they are proposing to the telecommunications bylaw that was enacted in Monterey in 1998. That bylaw proposed just one tower, at Mt. Wilcox, and, of course, cell phones, fiber optic computer lines, high speed Internet, and other things were not as important at that time.

The thrust of the bylaw revision will be to broaden the wireless telecommunication overlay district to cover the entire town. This will enable the siting of additional towers, with the immediate aim of providing cell phone service to the majority of Monterey.

Copies of the bylaw revision were handed out at the meeting and are available on the Monterey town website (www.montereyma.gov): click on the Planning Board information. Note: this is a great website if you haven't seen it!

There were many questions from the public regarding numbers, appearance, and siting of towers. Monica Webb, Monterey representative on Wired West, said that she did not want to impede the introduction of fiber optics, because the

Glynis Marsh

Rawson Brook Farm, January 2011

present technology of wires and cables will soon become obsolete, and that fiber optics is the wave of the future. Environmental impact was also a concern; particularly because the technology is moving so fast. It was pointed out that Monterey is in a unique position because it has no cell towers.

There has been much research on the health implications of cell towers, and a sizable number of people at the hearing were concerned and had brought along many newspaper articles, books, and copies of recent civil suits that addressed the issue. However, the health implications of not having cell phone coverage were also mentioned; such as having a car malfunction late at night when there is no cell phone coverage.

The Planning Board will consider all inputs by residents, and there will be a final vote on the new bylaw at the town meeting in May.

Other Bylaw Issues

Robert Lazzarini of the Zoning Board of Appeals met with the Select Board to make sure that everyone is on the same page with bylaw revisions. The revisions will be larger than thought, so "clarifying" them is not a good description. New passages, and in some cases, whole sections of the bylaws need to be fashioned. This will take a two-thirds vote at town meeting. Lazzarini requested that the Select Board give their imprimatur to the acceptable revisions.

He suggested that the Board meet with the team of bylaw revision advisors over the next four months, that they negotiate a price for Attorney Bobrowski's participation, that they place an article on the town meeting warrant appropriating the necessary funds, and that two articles be placed in the *Monterey News*, one describing the background to the problem and the other introducing Attorney Bobrowski and explaining the major bylaw revisions suggested, and the details of the revisions. Lazzarini also suggested that the Select Board arrange for Bobrowski's participation in the May 7, 2011, town meeting.

The Select Board agreed, and noted that several other towns have recently used Attorney Bobrowski for bylaw revision advice. He will be asked to attend a future Select Board meeting with a proposal of his anticipated time and costs.

Beartown Parking

Susan Cooper, Cliff Weiss, Karen Anderson, and Julie Shapiro spoke with the Board about a parking ban on Beartown Mountain Road, which provides access to Beartown Mountain State Park. This is state property, and they feel that we need a parking lot so that people who want to cross country ski can park there. There isn't room on the present road for cars to park and the town plows to get by them, and cars cannot be parked in the turnaround because then the trucks could not turn around; also, the road cannot be widened because of a ditch on the south side. It was agreed that because we are in the midst of a heavy winter season, the issue will be addressed when the seasons change.

Highways and Operations

Director of Operations Maynard Forbes reported on the Highway Department activities:

- Plowed, salted, and sanded roads many times.
- Patched potholes, Main Road.
- Submitted supplemental documents to the State for the Route 23 paving project.
- Trained relief driver on the computer sanders and truck.
- Traffic control for tree warden and picked up trees cut by tree warden on Hupi and Main Roads.
- Spoke with C. Samuelson about expansion plans at New England Keswick.
- Removed snow from downtown area several times.
- Changed blades on Kenmore.
- Installed Roadwatch in foreman's truck.

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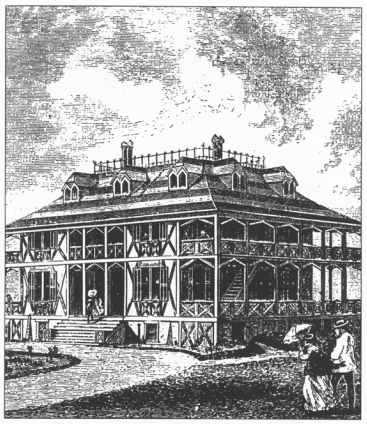

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- Received sand delivery and pushed sand into shed.
- Reviewed proposed cell tower bylaw revisions and made recommendations to the Planning Board.

Police Matters

Police Chief Gareth Backhaus reported the following Police Department activities:

- Disabled vehicle, Main Road.
- Well-being checks, Blue Hill Road and Chestnut Hill Road.
- Medical assist, Tyringham Road.
- Building check, Main Road.
- Motor vehicle accident; car ran into the post office on Main Road.
- Investigating reported robbery at the General Store.
- Investigating suspicious activity, Fairview Road; beaver traps set by town are being cut up and beavers being set loose.
- Motor vehicle lockout, Prescott Lane.
- Stray dog, West Road; dog was from Great Barrington, and owner was contacted.
- Investigated possible stolen property, Main Road.
- Assisted New Marlborough Police Department with a motor vehicle accident.
- Suspicious activity, Main Road.
- Assisted Highway Department at transfer station after car was seen using transfer station when it was closed; officer posted another "Closed" sign, but couldn't close gate because of snow.
- False alarms, Mt. Hunger Road, Beartown Mountain Road.
- Thirty-two traffic stops made; one car towed due to expired registration.

Note: be sure to review your licenses! The state no longer sends out letters.

Glynis Marsh

Town Beach, January 28, 2011

Insurance Matters

The liability portion of the town's insurance was reviewed. Pat Mielke, Treasurer, said that prior to 2005 the review was handled by the Select Board. It was transferred to the Treasurer at the request of Michael Storch, then a Select Board member. Pat feels that the responsibility should be passed back to the Select Board now. She will still handle Workers' Compensation and health/life policies, since they are directly associated with the payroll. The Select Board considered the request and at a later meeting agreed to handle the liability portion of the insurance, with the assistance of the Inter-Departmental Secretary. The board felt that they should meet with the insurance representative to see why our rate hasn't been lowered, considering that we have a good record.

Wired West Cooperative

Wired West's mission is to build and operate a universal, open-access, fiber-to-

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the-home network for western Massachusetts towns unserved and underserved by high-speed Internet. Wired West plans a cooperative governance structurre, subject to approval by member towns. Monterey will vote on this at a town meeting.

This and That

At a pole hearing with National Grid on January 3, the Select Board approved National Grid's request to place a pole on Main Road approximately 737 feet southeast of the centerline of the intersection of Stevens Lake Road. Maynard Forbes requested that the pole be set back off the pavement by eight feet, which Lisa Jasinski of National Grid agreed to do. The only abutter is Scott Jenssen who had no objections.

Stanley Ross volunteered to fill the vacant spot on the Zoning Board of Appeals until May, and the Select Board agreed. The board also reviewed an application from a proposed new alternate, J. Levin.

Emily Johnson was voted in to fill the seat on the Park Commision vacated by Bridget Kranz.

Stephen Rose resigned his position on the Planning Board. Interested parties should contact the Town Hall and send a resume; the appointment will be made right away and will be good until the next town meeting in May. Potential applicants are also encouraged to attend meetings to see what's happening.

Tom Wickham from the Planning Board in Lee is interested in starting a Berkshire County Wind Consortium, so that we can have a local wind company instead of a big national company. A think-tank meeting is planned for February; call the Lee Town Hall for date.

A resident who fell and fractured her leg at the Transfer Station sent a letter to the Select Board.

Correction/Clarification

Erroneous information was given in last month's *Monterey News* about one of Ormsbee's school buses being parked at the Town Garage. Ormsbee Bus Company, and more specifically Bus #8, is not now, and never has been, parked at the Monterey Town Garage or on any other town property.

During my absence in December that request was made to the town, but when I was made aware of it, I made it known that it would be in violation of the Ethics Reform Laws for a private contractor to park a bus on town property. Since I am a town employee as well as an employee of the bus company that would be using the town property, such a practice would also put me in violation of the conflict of interest laws.

Bus #8 is parked in Mill River for the winter months, as it is every year.

— Linda Thorpe

Town Skating Party Feb. 21

The Monterey Parks Department is hosting its annual skating party at the ice rink behind the Fire House on Monday, February 21, from 1–3 pm. Please join us for skating, hot dogs, hot chocolate, cider, and games.

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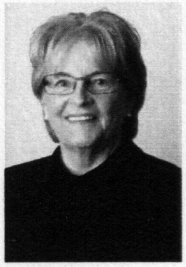

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A Lesson in Community

Learning about Community Helpers is a standard feature of Kindergarten curriculum. Children learn that bakers bake bread, that librarians help us find books, that police officers keep us safe. But in a classroom setting we are rarely able to convey what "community" really means, or what it can mean when community members reach beyond their official roles and truly look out for their neighbors.

Well, for the children in Monterey that lesson has not been lost!

Last month my assistant, Belinda Twing, and I walked in to a very cold schoolhouse. It seems our heating system had used more fuel than expected, and we had run out overnight. We made the appropriate calls and prepared to leave the building for the day. But we needed somewhere to take the children before we made our way to New Marlborough Central School. We put in a call to Kenn Basler at the Monterey General Store, who has been a true friend of the school for years. When we asked if we could use his cozy seating area to hold class for a bit, he did not hesitate for even a second before saying yes. Our class was all smiles when an officer from the Monterey Police Department showed up to escort us from the school to the General Store so that the children would be safe and not have to walk in the snowbanks. Mr. Basler greeted us with a large plate of cookies and cups of yummy hot chocolate. We read a few wintery stories. Knowing that Mrs. Milan would soon be showing up to teach P.E., we called Mark Makuc at his house and asked about using the large room at the Monterey Library. He came right over and started heating it up for us, even though the library was closed at the time. Mrs. Milan met us at the library and had the kids doing stretches and exercises without missing a beat! When her class ended the bus arrived ready to take us to New Marlborough Central School, where our fellow teachers welcomed us with smiles.

For the ten little children that followed me down the street to the Monterey General Store that day, this might have been one of the most important learning experiences of the year. A day gone awry was transformed into a cozy, sheltering experience, thanks to the caring people who reached out to us. As a friend of mine put it when I recounted the story to him later, "Sounds very Norman Rockwell!" How true. How fortunate our school is to have all of you. And how fortunate we all are to have each other.

Many thanks to Kenn Basler, Mark Makuc, and the Monterey Police, and all those who gave us a little smile that day! You are what community is all about.

— Lynn Webster

Rabies Clinic March 5

A Rabies Clinic for cats and dogs will be held on Saturday, March 5, 2011, from 1:00–2:30 pm at the Monterey Fire Station. The fee is $10.00 per shot.

2011 dog licenses are due April 1.

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Monterey Library Notes

It's budget time on Beacon Hill again, and Massachusetts' libraries could use your support again. In the last decade library funding from the state has dropped by 39 percent, while library visits have gone up by 50 percent. Interlibrary loans have gone up 350 percent, circulation up by 29 percent, and Internet usage up by 128 percent. This has caused the libraries of Massachusetts to become more and more efficient—doing more and more for less and less. One-tenth of 1 percent is the total percentage of the entire state budget used for libraries. In 2001 the total circulation in Massachusetts was 45.7 million items, and there was 9.9 million in state aid. In 2010 there were 59.4 million items circulated, but state aid dropped to 6.8 million. State aid amounts to $1.05 per resident, which would seem small enough that it wouldn't make a difference. But in Monterey's case it has. Until three years ago all the computers and software to automate were paid for by state aid. Since then our local budget has picked up the CWMARS fees, but all computer hardware still comes out of state monies. In joining CWMARS we benefit as part of a statewide delivery system that keeps books and other items moving smoothly between libraries. Our local budget could in no way replicate this service. Many other services provided by the Massachusetts Board of Library Commissioners will affect our library services, including cooperative buying contracts that make a huge difference in buying power for books, DVDs, and supplies.

The Board of Library Commissioners last fall decided to request an increase to their budget from Governor Patrick and the legislature. Unfortunately the governor has since asked the commissioners to cut the budget by another 7 percent. A complete reorganization of library services last year is already in jeopardy. There is the feeling that library funding at the state level has reached the breaking point. There will be many more numbers along the way before the budget is finalized, but starting off with a 7 percent cut would be bad by any standards and in any year. Added to the 39 percent cuts in the last decade, this year's proposed cuts will be simply devastating. If you can communicate with our local legislators or the governor about what library services mean to you, please do. We thank all the residents in Monterey for supporting our local library budget, but we also remind you that the services you depend on are in part funded by the state, and continuous cutting of the budget will result in more reduced services that cannot be made up by local funding in any way.

February Library Events

Have fun with your preschooler and library books with Libby Wolf, who will present Book-Looks for Preschoolers at the Monterey Library on Tuesday mornings, February 8 and 22, from 9:45 to 10:15 am. Libby was a preschool and elementary school teacher of Language Arts for many years, and will introduce many different ways of enjoying a range of books to your child.

The adult book discussion group will meet on Monday, February 28, at 7:30 pm in the library's Knox Room to discuss *Little Bee* by Chris Cleave.

— Mark Makuc, Library Director

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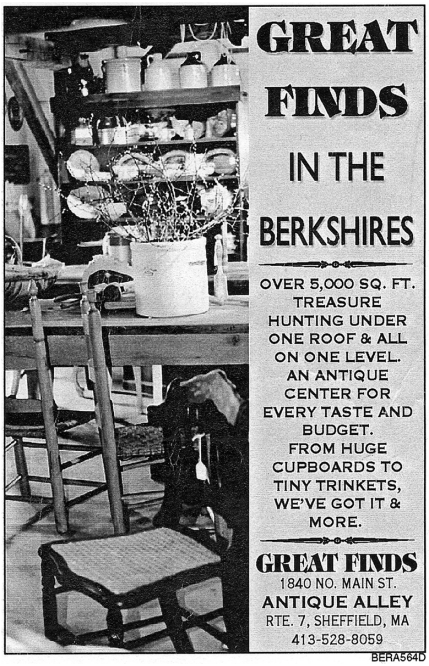
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Bidwell House Awarded Housatonic Heritage Grant

The Upper Housatonic Valley National Heritage Area (UHVNHA) has awarded the Bidwell House Museum a $5,000 matching grant to develop a "Colonial History Education Program for Young Audiences," one of ten grants awarded this year to nonprofits in the 29-town region of northwest Litchfield County and Berkshire County that make up the UHVNHA.

"I am very pleased to have the opportunity to develop the new education program for the museum and for our local schools," said Barbara Palmer, director. "My kids spent 6 1/2 hours on a school bus to Plimoth Plantation to learn about the colonial period in New England. Plimoth is wonderful, but we have a lot to explore about the history of our region right here in southern Berkshire County. Beyond daily life in the 1750s, children can learn about the Native American heritage, about mapping, planting and seeding, about simple machines and many other skills. "

The museum is working with an education consultant and setting up a teachers' advisory committee to design a state-of-the-art program in two parts: one part will travel to the classroom as a "museum in a box," and the other part will be an on-site field trip program. Many teachers report that it has become more difficult to get approval and funding for field trips in recent years. The "museum in a box" can fill some of that need, with hands-on materials for each child in the class. A shorter trip may be attractive as well.

The committee will be reviewing the state curriculum guidelines to best fit the experience at the Bidwell House Museum into the classroom. Part of the grant money will cover the cost of buses to bring school classes to the museum to test the new programs for fine tuning before they are offered more broadly in the next school year.

"We are now challenged to raise the matching funds," notes Palmer. "Generous donors have contributed about half of the match, but the museum still has $2,500 to go. I hope we can gather the remaining funds by the end of April. It would be a great gift to the museum and to Berkshire County kids!"

If you would like to contribute, please send donations to the Museum Education Fund to the museum at Box 537, Monterey, MA 01245 or donate online at www.bidwellhousemuseum.org.

Tai Chi, Qi Gong Featured at Feb. 16 Potluck

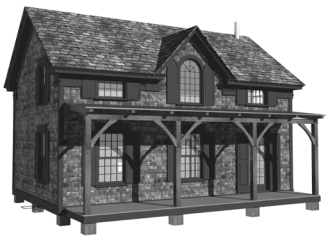
The January Community Potluck was canceled, due to an unexpected snowstorm AFTER an expected one (it's been that kind of a winter, hasn't it?) We hope everybody got the word in time, thanks to a lot of help from Liz Goodman. Our planned speaker, Dr. Andrew Cort, has agreed to speak in March; thanks, Andy!

For the February 16th Potluck, David Crowe will give a brief talk on the principles and benefits of tai chi and qi gong, and will lead participants in some simple breathing and movement exercises that demonstrate the power of chi. According to our presenter, "The life-enhancing art of tai chi has been practiced in China for hundreds of years. A form of moving meditation, regular tai chi practice can calm the mind, relax the body, and strengthen the spirit. Emphasis is placed on cultivating chi, or internal energy, as opposed to simply developing muscle mass and brute force. It is chi cultivation that makes tai chi so highly effective for good health, energy, and elevated spirit. *Qi gong* literally means chi work, or sustained effort to develop chi." David and his wife Kathy are certified instructors and founders of Berkshire Tai Chi, Hall of the Soaring Eagle, and teach classes in tai chi, qi gong, and Shaolin yoga at Berkshire Pulse in Housatonic.

The next Monterey Community Potluck will be held (barring extreme snowfall!) on February 16 in the Fellowship Hall of the Monterey Meetinghouse at 6 pm. Please bring a dish to share with a serving utensil and a place setting and silverware for yourself. Everyone is welcome.

Remember, if there's any doubt in your mind about the weather affecting the potluck, call the church number, 528-5850, and the message will reflect any changes/cancellations.

—Barbara Dahlman & Kyle Pierce



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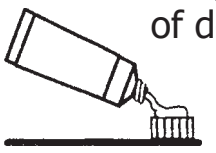

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Route 23 Monterey

Who's Who in Monterey: Esther Heffernan

(*Note: This is a revival of a popular column from years back.*)

We in Monterey are proud of our library. We think of it as a fine little house in the town center, full of books and such, where people meet up and exchange news, opinions, and good community spirit. One or another of our neighbors is always behind the desk, cheerfully fielding esoteric requests, checking on our relationship with CWMARS, solving problems, making book-related promises. We see these skillful workers in the library whenever we go in. We talk to them on the phone when we call. Now we get to learn a bit more about one of them, Assistant Librarian Esther Heffernan.

Esther lives on Mt. Hunger Road with John and Mulligan. Mulligan is a corgi and John is a man. Esther has lived there since 2005 and worked at the library the last four years. Though she is a booklover and an English teacher, Esther was not lured to Monterey by its public house of books. Horses brought her here.

This may give you a picture of a red-headed Italian woman on horseback riding into town and tying up at the library hitching rail. It has been a little bit like that. Esther was living in Otis and read an article in the *New York Times* about some sturdy, handsome horses with their unusual

Bonner McAllester

gaits and fine qualities. Then she picked up another great paper, the *Monterey News*, and there was the ad for Roberts Woods Farm with its Icelandics.

Esther is a woman of action. She moved from Otis to Monterey to get eight miles closer to the Icelandics on Art School Road. At first she lived at Bidwell House, working as a docent, caretaker, and assistant to the director. She loved living in this town and was able to buy a piece of land on Mt. Hunger Road. Her house was built there and she moved in. Two years later her husband John came, too. Esther says she retired early and moved to Otis, at age sixty, because she felt she'd "had an unhappy adolescence and wanted to try again." Now, she says she's had a great time from sixty to seventy. The second adolescence has been a good one.

Esther Heffernan has not always been a sexagenarian adolescent. The first time around, she was born in Sharon, Connecticut, and went to school in Millerton and later Springfield, Massachusetts, when her family moved. She went to a junior college, as they were called back then, did not find a Life Path there (no horses, perhaps), and got married and had three children. Then she decided to try college again and this time fit it in with all the child rearing and housekeeping. She worked her way through American International College, majoring in English, and then taught English at Fermi High School in Enfield, Connecticut.

Esther says, "I read *The Feminine Mystique* (by Betty Friedan) and knew the housewife role would not satisfy me. Even with the house, the children, and the teaching job, Esther added more college for herself and went to Trinity in Hartford where she got an MA in English Literature. Now she was ready for her next job: a writing consultant for the State of Connecticut. When pressed, she explained that it was her job to teach teachers to teach writing.

As if this were not enough, Esther became a dedicated student and practicer of Hatha Yoga.

"I've been around the world doing yoga with Rodney Yee," she told me, and "Mr. Iyengar was my main teacher." Esther got out her yoga mat and immedi-

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ately showed this reporter some important stretches and principles for feet, things that are good for everyone, but especially helpful for a person who fell down the stairs back in July.

Yoga and English are not the only therapeutic practices Esther espouses. She worked at the horse farm on Art School Road in the therapeutic riding program and saw wonderful changes in people with autism, cerebral palsy, Down syndrome, and epilepsy. When the farm was sold, the therapeutic program went quiet for a while, but Esther and her business partner Beth Timlege are looking now for a new facility so they can get back to work helping people. They will use their Icelandic horses, of course. Right now, Esther's two horses live at Kinallen Farm on Blue Hill Road, and she rides them regularly on trails there and in Beartown State Forest.

Horses, yoga, and library work keep Esther happy and busy. Now that she has enjoyed her second adolescence, she plans to keep on keeping on, "not ready to quit anything." At this time of year, she gets together with other Icelandic horse lovers in town and celebrates Thorrablot, a traditional Viking midwinter festival that can go on for weeks and that in Iceland involves special food such as putrefied sharks and seal flippers. Esther did not mention any of these, as we visited in her modern inland home on Mt. Hunger Road.

— Bonner McAllester

Eagle Fund Raises Over $8,000 for Schools

Despite the fragile economy that has impacted donations worldwide, the passion and persistence of dedicated Mt. Everett High School students raised more than $8,000 in pledges during the annual November phonathon for the Eagle Fund. The Eagle Fund offers the children of the Southern Berkshire Regional School District outstanding enrichment programming in the arts, sciences, and technology outside of their normal academic curriculum.

Students from Mt. Everett Regional High School volunteered on two evenings in November to make calls for the annual event, which is one of the primary fundraisers of the year for the Eagle Fund. Board members for the fund organized calling lists for the event and supervised student callers as they contacted hundreds of residents in the five towns that comprise the Southern Berkshire district: Alford, Egremont, Monterey, New Marlborough, and Sheffield. The student volunteers are members of the school's chapter of SADD (Students Against Destructive Decisions).

The fund—an endowment managed by Berkshire Taconic Community Foundation —makes grants each spring for enrichment programs and opportunities proposed by students, teachers, and community members. Dozens of grants since the founding of the eagle fund in 1998 have helped pay for educational endeavors in science, mathematics, the arts, and other areas, serving to augment programs in the regular school curriculum funded through the school district's budget.

The Grant Committee of the Eagle Fund, working with our sister Janet's Fund, reviewed thirty-five applications from students, teachers, administrators, and members of the larger SBRSD community and recommended nineteen grants with a total of $30,195 in 2010. The grant-making criteria were: excellence of project or service; its impact on the school community; its existing or future connection to other district offerings; and the ability of the applicant to carry out the project.

Pledges garnered by the student volunteers will be added to the fund's endowment. Earnings from the fund pay for the grants, allowing the endowment principal to grow over time and serve as an ongoing source of enrichment funding for Southern Berkshire schools.

More information about the eagle fund is available at www.eagle-fund.net or at www.sbrsd.org/pages/eagle.fund.

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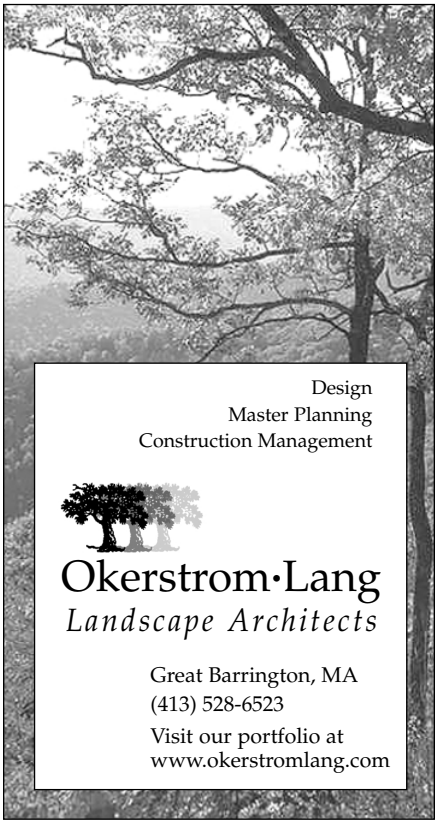

Bonner McAllester

Maureen Banner

Otter slide trail through woods near Hupi Road and red fox snacking under Banners' bird feeder, Griswold Road.

January Wildlife Report: Otters, Robins, and More

Early in January, Ellen Coburn of Beartown Mountain Road reported a robin visiting a crabapple tree in her yard, eating small dried-up fruits. There were also robins along Diane's Trail at Gould Farm, Steve Snyder tells us, eating little dark berries in the bushes there.

Also along Rawson Brook, folks have seen otters in the water, and here on Hupi Road before the big snow of January 12, we had an exciting "toboggan trail" made by an otter that clearly preferred sledding to walking (see photo); that thick, smooth pelt makes a perfect sled: no friction. The track was about six inches wide, smooth and continuous most of the way. If you looked closely you could see dig marks or pushing off places where the animal sometimes gave a boost with its feet in order to take another long slide. You could also see a slimmer tail drag within the toboggan trail, the tail moving side-to-side making a curving zigzag. This otter trail ran along the book, sometimes into the brook, and it also went up the bank and through the woods, uphill or down, it didn't seem to matter. Gravity was not the impetus.

Maureen and Mike Banner had a red fox browsing under their bird feeder (see photo), and on January 20, Alice Howell saw a red fox under the bird feeder at her place on Beartown Mountain Road.

Sometimes we in Monterey are treated to winter with snow buntings. Steve Snyder says they are here now, around the Gould Farm gardens, and I saw a small flock of them along the Tyringham Road, three weeks ago.

Send your reports to me or phone: 528-9385, bmca@berkshire.net.

— Bonner McAllester

Free Film on Wireless Tech Health Risks Feb. 5

The documentary film *Public Exposure: Dna, Democracy and the Wireless Revolution* will be shown at 7:30 pm on Saturday, February 5, in the Monterey Meetinghouse Fellowship Hall. This 58-minute film is the first of its kind to explore the potential health risks and consequences of proliferating wireless devices and transmitting antennas (especially cell phones). The state of the science and needed public policy solutions are reviewed from an international citizen's rights and consumer advocacy perspective. The film talks about what the communications industry prefers not to discuss — how exposure to radiation from wireless communications technology poses a major environmental health threat.

See footage of experts discussing the known biological threats posed by wireless radiation, sit in on public hearings (including pleas by Senator Tom Hayden of California) discussing the need for a rational policy on cell tower siting, and gain valuable information to help you discuss this important issue intelligently with neighbors, town boards, school boards, *anyone involved in tower siting*, and attorneys. It is also a great teaching tool for students.

The movie is free for Monterey residents; donations will be accepted from others. For more information contact Nancy Marcus, 414-644-3290.

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Monterey Meets Ngalla: We Made It!

The "Monterey Meets Ngalla" Project is delighted to give the good news we have surpassed our fundraising goal of $4,000, with a total of $7,200! Because of your generosity, one hundred more families in Ngalla, Cameroon, will now have a hand-washing station in their homes that will help to improve the families' health. In addition, due to some very generous anonymous donations, Ngalla will also be able to build its first latrine at the village's elementary school—a real sanitation milestone for the community!

Many, many thanks to all who helped us reach our goal….and with **Special Thanks** to:

Joe Baker, who once again generously donated his time and talents to create the greeting cards and the two beautiful posters that were on display at the General Store;

Your Color Connection in Lenox for donating some of the printing work to our campaign;

The Center for Peace Through Culture for its financial support that covered many campaign expenses; and to

Kenn Basler for so generously making precious space available to us at the General Store for the sale of the cards and pouches that enabled the project to reach its financial goal.

With gratitude to you all! We could not wait to let Ruth Engo know of the campaign's success, and, as you can imagine, she was thrilled with the news. She has sent her own message to Monterey as follows:

"Making potable water, clean hands, dignified toilets, and basic hygiene, the focus of African Action on AIDS's Preventive Health Plans in African villages and schools is our vision for the next five years. This is so, because of the following:

• Curative health is too expensive for those who live on a dollar a day.

• Most of the opportunistic diseases that kill people living with HIV in Africa are water-related diseases like typhoid, cholera, diarrhea, and dysentery.

• When communities practice good hygiene, use toilets, and have access to safe water supplies, their lives become transformed. It has been said that good toilets, safe, clean water, 'anti-malaria' behaviors, as well as access to health education, can transform a country's economy, as each dollar invested in preventive health earns $8 in return!

• Investment on preventive health, including safe water, clean hands, and good toilets, accelerates the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) in any materially poor country.

"As the UN Secretary General declared on March 22, 2010 (International Water Day), there are 36 million water-related deaths worldwide, including 1.5 million deaths of children from diarrhea each year. Moreover, 2.6 billion people around the world do not have access to sanitation.

"It was based on these realities that Monterey and Ngalla in Cameroon decided to partner three years ago, using Ngalla as a case study that could eventually be replicated in other Cameroonian villages and beyond. Since the creation of this partnership, various activities have been accomplished, including: the provision of 100 treated bed nets against malaria; 100 drinking stations; the celebration of the Day of the African Child that led to tree planting around the Ngalla elementary school; and more. Thanks to another great fundraising campaign that generated a total of $7,200— $1,720 from the community and the remaining funds from anonymous donations—this great trend will be continued in 2011. The goal of providing 100 new hand washing stations has been reached, and in addition, a multisection latrine will be built at Ngalla's elementary school during the next Day of the African Child in June 2011.

I send a million thanks to the entire community, and special thanks to Kenn Basler, Manager of the General Store, for opening the store to create life in abundance!

My short life with the people of Monterey has allowed me to meet many incredibly generous and inspiring people: people who have made truly remarkable compromises in the hope of making this world a better place for all; people who have made a commitment to improving the lives of others—and in this particular case, those "others" are absolute strangers.

May God bless each and every member of the Monterey community! May their commitment be transformative, giving courage and strength to those who receive their kind donations, and in so doing, raise a New Humanity based on friendships, peace, self effort, and personal responsibility!"

— Ruth Bamela Engo , President of
African Action on AIDS,
Yaoundé, Cameroon

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"Garden Gustation"

What's Cooking from Monterey Gardens & Farms

Gustation? The *Encarta Dictionary* states: "the action of tasting, or the sense or faculty of taste."

My partner, Stephen, and I are home-vegetable gardeners. We were fortunate to have had a successful growing season in 2010 and grew a lot of our winter food in the garden. Many folks are joining local a CSA (Community Supported Agriculture) for their produce and have received veggies to winter over. A new Community Garden was also started in Monterey this past summer. Many other products are produced here in Monterey—tasty Monterey Chevre, sweet, extraordinary maple syrup, or Frannie's delicious blueberries, for example.

It's challenging sometimes figuring out what to do with some of the overwintered garden produce, never mind deciding "What's for dinner?" I thought it might be a fun idea to pass along some ideas of what we are cooking/baking with this food and better yet to hear from others how they are using these neighborhood foods.

The Butternut Squash (BS)

This year I started out by planting five hills of Waltham BS. Poor germination threatened any hopes of our own BS to enjoy. I replanted what few seeds I had left, fearing I was too late in the season. I also transplanted a few of the surviving seedlings so all five hills had at least one

Wendy Jensen

plant. Each hill ended up with about two plants each, and with special attending they grew like crazy. The fruits of our labor paid off with seventy-two bulbous globes of BS. Now, we both LOVE BS, but I began doing the math ... fifty-two weeks a year … and we don't really consume it in the summer. We were inundated with BS. We are storing a lot of BS in our basement; our most significant was almost eight pounds. Here is one way that I have been using up our wonderful BS (in addition to giving it to everyone who stops by):

Curried Butternut Squash Soup
(adapted from *Silver Palate Cookbook*)
Underlined ingredients ours or very local.

4 T butter
2 cups chopped onions (ours)
3 tsp curry powder
3 pounds butternut squash (2 med. size)
2 apples, peeled, cored, and cut up (drops from a friend's tree)
3 cups chicken or vegetable stock or water
1-2 cups cider*
Salt and pepper to taste
*(We prefer Windy Hill's unpasteurized, which we freeze just for this soup)

1. Melt the butter in a large pot. Add chopped onions and curry powder and cook, covered, over low heat until onions are tender (about 25 minutes).
2. Peel the squash, cut in two, scrape out the seeds and cut up (about 1" cubes).
3. When onions are tender, pour in the stock, add squash and apples, and bring to a boil. Reduce heat and simmer until squash and apples are very tender, about 30–40 minutes.
4. Let the mixture cool to just warm and puree with immersion blender or run through food processor.
5. Return the pureed soup to the pot (if using the food processor) and add cider until the soup is of the desired consistency.
6. Season to taste with salt and pepper. Garnish with shredded apple if desired.

I don't always measure exactly and I'll bet you don't either . . . ENJOY!

What did you grow that you are keeping and eating over the winter? Do you have a favorite recipe using Monterey Chevre? What are you doing with all of those potatoes? Carrots? Beets? Etc.?

Email me with your ideas: WENDY@GMAIL.COM.

— Wendy Jensen

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From the Meetinghouse . . .

It isn't far from the Meetinghouse to the library, the general store, the post office. Not much further to town hall, the fire hall, or the skating rink. But today it seems like an even closer journey to travel to the Meetinghouse through time rather than through space.

You may already know that the Meetinghouse wasn't always in its present location. No, the building where we gather today hasn't been moved. I mean "the Meetinghouse" generically, in its spiritual, social, and civic function: as a center of activity in the center of town. In that sense, the Meetinghouse is in its third location in what has been an ongoing southward migration. That journey began, of course, after the then-congregation split from the church in what was northern Township #1, present-day Tyringham.

I speculate that it may have been the women who instigated the change. Not necessarily; there may have been some theological, political, fractious, financial, or other reason that got the men into an uproar first. Maybe. But what I imagine is this.

Walking home from church on a cold, snowy, sleet- or ice-coated late afternoon, one of the women had had enough. We'll never know why, unless it's reported in one of the cryptic sermons recorded in code in journals still housed at the Bidwell House Museum. Maybe her feet or fingers were seriously frostbitten this time. Or one of her children had been soaked to the bone navigating snowdrifts. Perhaps that morning the preacher took a stance on the Good Book she couldn't countenance. Maybe a dear friend in the about-to-become Tyringham church had passed away, and she was reluctant to return to the place where her grief was salted by absence.

On the other hand, it could have been as simple as a cold space too cramped for a growing community. There might have been competition among churchgoers for seats away from drafty windows, with the crowd who lived nearby always getting there first. Proximity will sometimes do that.

For whatever reason, something shifted in her long-suffering, or simmer-raging, soul. She might have talked it over with the other women. Then they may have rebelled in a body, like the ancient Greek women who found a sure way to have their collective opinion heard. Or the others may have heard her, soothed her, agreed with her, and then proposed a change to the men. More likely, in this scene, most agreed, some didn't.

But maybe she simply made it home, took off her shawl and her frozen leather boots. Maybe she stirred up the fire, turned to her husband and said, "Ebenezer, we need a church. On this side of the mountain. We need to call our own pastor."

The men may have already been in the middle of a similar insight of their own. Some may have been at first resistant, some more open, to the new idea. Maybe the women weren't actively involved at all and the men announced the change to the women, each man back at home after a town meeting. However it happened, call their own pastor they did. Adonijah Bidwell arrived.

In other words, it was a time not unlike this one, full of challenging weather. Rich with people behaving like people, each juggling a balance of simple sweetness and complex convolutions. People expressing needs and wants, hopes and fears. People struggling with the breaking and building of community.

Ten years ago, there were less than ten of us who generally inhabited the Meetinghouse upstairs. We were struggling then, too, with deep-water feelings and complex issues. We, too, were involved with being in the middle of a pastoral call. Ten years ago this summer, we called Liz Goodman to this place. Like Adonijah, she said yes.

That simple yes was miracle enough for us back then. It's still enough for us today, so we're quietly celebrating these most recent ten years of Meetinghouse history in our hearts all year long. If you see Liz in town, wish her happy anniversary.

On the other hand, if you want to drop by the Meetinghouse on a Sunday morning, the windows are well sealed. The furnace is working. About twenty of us usually gather, so there's plenty of room in the pews, though less than there used to be. And, revolutionary news, we got rid of the horsehair-stuffed red velvet on the seats years ago and now the pews are comfortably cushioned. We range in age from eighty-something years to single-digit months. Some of us are farmers, some aren't. Some of us are Gould Farmers, some aren't. Some of us live in Monterey full time. Others live here part time, or just drop by on Sunday mornings. Some stay, some go. Some go and come back. Some get here by happenstance, some by invitation.

In other words, you're likely to find the folks here rather like yourself. People behaving like people, navigating the outer life and celebrating the inner life in this part of town.

— Mary Kate Jordan

❊

Dennis J. Downing

Attorney at Law

❊

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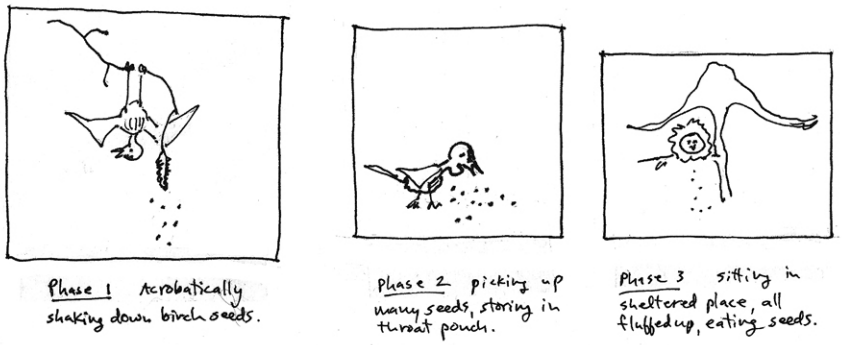
A Gallup of Redpolls

What we are reporting here is an invasion, also called an irruption, of little redheaded birds. They are *Carduelis flammea*, named for the thistle seeds they love, which are *Carduus* in Latin, and for their flaming polls. By this we refer not to scandalous opinion gathering so much as to the brilliant red patch on the fore-crown of each male and female bird. These are finches, small and brown-streaked with tiny yellow bills that have fine dark tips, all the better for eating thistle seeds. We do not see them every winter because they are really Holarctic in their range, breeding in Alaska, Quebec, British Columbia, Newfoundland, and the Magdalen Islands. They will stay in these freezing northern places as long as there is plenty to eat.

Redpolls love to eat birch seeds, and some years the birches do not produce so well. Those years the birds go south in winter, looking for birches and alders that are on a different production schedule from the ones up north. Some observers find the redpolls down south roughly every other year and tie this to a biennial bumper crop of birch seeds in the north. Those are the years the birds stay home.

In a good northern seed year, the redpolls draw upon their special equipment and brilliant three-phase foraging scheme to see them through the rough subzero winter. They fly to the birches and acrobatically knock down scads of seeds, which land on the snow below. Then the birds hop down and gather up all the seeds they can. They do not stop to shell and eat each one, rather they slug them into their esophageal diverticula. Each redpoll has one of these partway down the neck. It has been described as a "partially bilobed pocket" (*The Birder's Handbook*, 1988), and is a storage place for a shopper in a hurry. Once this is filled, the little bird can tuck up into a protected place, like a thick hemlock tree. Now it will fluff up its feathers, sit down on its chilly feet, and start bringing up the seeds one at a time for shelling and eating.


Phase 1 Acrobatically shaking down birch seeds.
Phase 2 picking up many seeds, storing in throat pouch.
Phase 3 sitting in sheltered place, all fluffed up, eating seeds.

In summary, the three phases of eating, for a redpoll:

1. acrobatically knock down seeds from way up in a tree;

2. get down on the snow and pickety-pick up lots of seeds with little bill;

3. sit in sheltered place, all fluffed up, and shell and eat the seeds.

Each phase is a brilliant energy saver, and enables redpolls to survive prolonged cold in arctic lands. Besides this, the little birds tunnel into the snow to get out of the wind and cold. Someone has discovered that if a bird tunnels two feet down in the snow, the temperature can be 25° F, while up above it is -50° or even colder.

The fact that we are seeing so many redpolls now is not an indication that the birches of the Magdalen Islands are dying off. They could be, but not necessarily. Around here, for instance, folks have noticed that the oaks have major acorn production some years but not others. This could drive our acorn eaters off some winters, maybe even to the Magdalen Islands, but then they would be back when acorns are up around here. This is adaptation, as is the snow tunneling.

Folks in Massachusetts see a few redpolls every winter, usually in small flocks, but sometimes in "great winter incursions" (*Birds of Massachusetts*, 1993). In years prior to 1955 flocks of 2,000 to 2,500 were seen in this state. In 1973–74, a flock of

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1,000 was reported, but most flocks seen recently contain fewer than 100 birds. Here on E. Hupi Road, we are getting close to 100 every morning. They come in the second wave, about 8:00 AM after the jays but before the woodpeckers, and they are so active and bouncy we have to understand that for them these single-digit days and nights are, well, southern. That is, they see no need to conserve energy or to use their three-phase feeding strategy. Look at them and you see what is meant by "flaunting it." I read that the collective noun for a bunch of these birds is a "gallup." At first this is quite a stretch, putting half an ounce of fluff in the same thought with a thundering herd of horses. But if it is sheer enthusiasm we are considering, the gallup is there with the redpolls, every morning. They are every bit as lively as the Kentucky Derby—plus they can fly.

Henry David Thoreau wrote about the redpolls in December 1855. Their enthusiasm, sheer liveliness, brilliant colors in the snow and ice sent him into raptures. Holden Swamp, Conantum (Concord) Massachusetts: "These crimson aerial creatures have wings which would bear them quickly to the regions of summer, but here [Holden Swamp, Dec.] is all the summer they want. What a rich contrast! Tropical colors, crimson breasts, on cold white snow! Such etherealness, such delicacy in their forms, such ripeness in their colors, in this stern and barren season! It is as surprising as if you were to find a brilliant crimson flower which flourished amid snows.… I am struck by the perfect confidence and success of nature.… There is superadded superfluous paintings and adornments, a crystalline jewel-like health and soundness, like the colors reflected from ice-crystals" (*Thoreau on Birds*, 1964, 9).

— Bonner J. McAllester

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New Marlborough Barns, Lewis Scheffey

Lewis Scheffey Paintings at Monterey Library

The work of Lewis Scheffey, one of Monterey's most distinguished artists, will be exhibited February 19 through March 19 in the Knox Room of the Monterey Library. An opening reception will be held on Saturday, February 19, from 7–9 pm.

These vibrant and colorful paintings are often inspired by the Berkshire landscape. In addition to working from the landscape, Lew's varied subject matter includes still life, figures, and portraits. Lew works primarily in oil, but throughout his career he has also worked extensively in watercolor and gouache, building a rich and varied body of work. We are excited to be presenting a small selection of his work here in Monterey.

ॐ

March 1 Application Deadline for Henriquez Fund for International Programs

The Youth World Awareness Program and the Alice and Richard Henriquez Funds of Berkshire Taconic Community Foundation are accepting applications through March 1. The funds support international travel, study, or work by young people ages 14 to 22. Applicants must be residents of Berkshire County, MA; Columbia or northeast Dutchess County, NY; or northwest Litchfield County, CT. Applications are available online at www.berkshiretaconic.org/Grantseekers/index.shtml or by calling 413-229-0370

Applications will be evaluated based on how the project will engage the applicant with young people in other countries, the opportunities it offers to learn new customs and lifestyles, and the applicant's community service while abroad.

Richard Henriquez established the Alice and Richard Henriquez Memorial Fund in 1998 to "encourage the development of peace among nations and justice for all people by funding international experiences for young men and women in their intellectually formative years." The success of the Henriquez Fund inspired Berkshire Taconic Community Foundation to establish the Youth World Awareness Program to raise additional funds to provide more grants.

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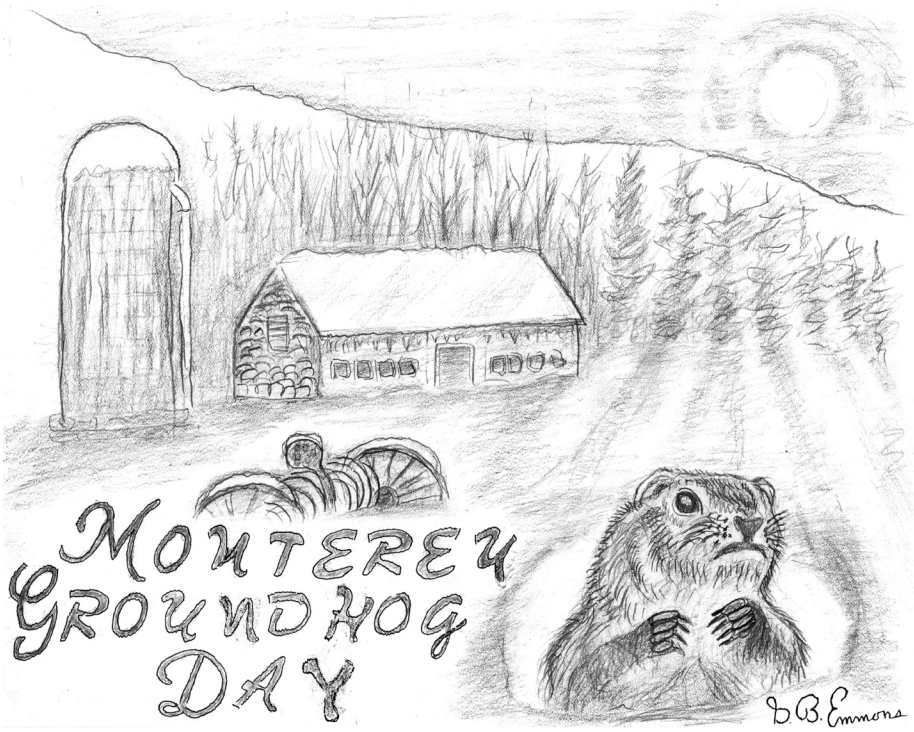

If you have spent the entire winter in Monterey, you may be looking forward to the final days of ice and snow. Now as a higher sun beams a slanting light across our agricultural landscape on February 2 to mark the pivotal midpoint of winter, it may dawn upon us that there is a glimmer of hope at the end of the tunnel. From another point of view somewhat more spiritual, "Let there be light" is a quotation from the biblical story of the first day of creation; then on the fourth day God lighted up both heaven and earth with the glow of the sun, moon, and stars "to divide the day from the night" and to "be for signs, and for seasons, and for days, and years."

Another biblical quotation, "The light of the body is the eye" (Mt 6:22, Lk 11:34), suggests that the amount of light we see has a direct bearing on our morale. Human beings who live near the land of the midnight sun are affected when they become deprived of the sun's energizing rays. I am also reminded of the eye of the Atlantic salmon, whose vision acts like a light meter. Solar signals strike the retina and travel via the optic nerve to other organs that allow the fish to emulate the light and dark of its habitat in the color of their skin.

It is curious that in this new year of 2011 the mythological activity of the groundhog, first spun like a spider's web over the musty rafters of a medieval mind, is still observed to this very day. In Monterey, however, it seems fitting that the groundhog's shadow upon the farm meadows and fence-lined hayfields somehow earns its image as an earthbound solar sundial, a symbol of celestial and environmental awareness. Obviously the groundhog's shadow is also the edge of a beam of light, but somehow it is seen as capable of predicting meteorology for the future.

We know that prehistoric cultures constructed stone monuments to register rays of both the winter and summer solstices, as well as the spring and autumn equinoxes—not to mention the creative implications of a midsummer night's dream. Some of the monuments like Stonehenge, those on Easter Island, and the primitive stone chambers in New Hampshire still stand as historic reminders of religious celestial observances. Closer to home, the late Tom Gillis once told me he had found a Native American medicine wheel near his property on Harmon Road. Like all the others, it consists of a ring of stones in a circle on the ground, positioned to register the light of the planets near the highest peak of Silver Hill.

Just as we appreciate seeing the farm animals and the wealth of wildlife in Monterey, it may still be appropriate, even in modem times, for us to acknowledge this day in the year of our lives by observing a lowly sentinel of the meadows as the sun makes its way through the heavens.

— George B. Emmons

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Snowbound

Showshoeing has much to recommend it. No elaborate preparation or bothersome delays: out the front door and you're under way. The pleasures are many: the immaculate unbroken glistening carpet of white and the exquisite silence save only for the crackling of tree trunks shrugging off a breeze at their upper reaches. The deep snow envelopes everything at ground level, covering up all debris—downed trees and jagged branches, stone boundaries as well—occupying most every depression, creating natural paths, opening routes unnavigable during the warmer seasons. There is also the thrill of "conquering" steep gradients with relative ease, thanks to metal fixtures beneath the snowshoes. Also, the exhilaration that comes from observing the busy tracks of all manner of creatures traveling every which way in their anxious quest for sustenance.

So it was the other day when I ventured out, delighted at the depths deposited by recent storms. Now, what I am about to relate ought not to be uttered in the same breath as those well-documented dramas of cave confinement or mountaintop marooning or Pacific atoll abandonment, but it did produce uncomfortable moments which at least hint at the trials involved in those other often tragic predicaments. The snow on my acreage was uncommonly abundant, and as I trudged along I couldn't help but notice how far down my snowshoes descended into the snowy depths. But that was fine; to make headway required additional effort, and this greater output translated into more intense exercise.

I headed toward a steep rise, approached the top, but never made the summit. Instead, I tumbled backward into the snow, a soft landing more embarrassing than distressing. I had, over the years, fallen occasionally and so proceeded to laugh it off. Indeed, I chose to lie on my back immobile in the snow for a few moments, enjoying a perspective rarely experienced. As I turned and prepared to regain my footing, I realized just how far I had sunk in. Moreover, each time I braced myself on the snow and attempted to rise, my hand gave way, plunging downward well below the surface. I tried repeatedly to lift off, attempted to pack down the surrounding snow so as to construct a solid foundation. It didn't work. I imagined the plight of quicksand captives and how their repeated struggles only aggravated the situation. It was not, however, anywhere near nightfall, and I wasn't hurt or cold—but this was ridiculous, and I wasn't getting anywhere.

At some point, my wife, reckoning I'd been gone too long, shouted out to me, "Are you OK?" I called back reassuringly. But then she spotted me off in the distance, lying on the snow, and concluded I'd withheld some of the facts. I was "okay"; still, I was unable to get to my feet. Her next words, "I'm going to call the police," were for me an unmistakable call to action. That would be downright humiliating. Embarrassment can be a powerful motivator. It was time, I concluded, to use my brain; thrashing about as I'd been doing had achieved nothing. I lacked any of the skills associated with survival training, but surely I could improve upon my performance to that point. Not far from where I lay I spotted a sturdy sapling. Why not, I reasoned, crawl over and use it as a crutch? I reached the tree, wrapped both my hands around it, and lifted up slowly into a standing position. Crisis averted.

This is not an inspirational story of a dramatic rescue or of personal heroics. It is a simple account by one individual who experienced however briefly a bout of helplessness, then discovered a sensible way out of his difficulty. We all can appreciate and benefit from encounters of this sort.

— Richard Skolnick

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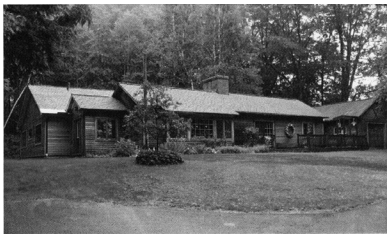

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She Was There, She Remembers

She is complaining about the seats when my mother and I arrive at Sanibel's Island Cinema for a 6 pm showing of *The King's Speech*. The new leather chairs are comfortable, but deep, and therefore she cannot see well. Initially, although sympathetic, I am more concerned about avoiding the front row in a sold-out showing of the movie, while my mother attempts to find her something to sit on. In the end, the aisle seat proves manageable, and we take the two seats to her immediate left.

For those of you who have not seen *The King's Speech*, I strongly recommend it. A rare quality film, it boasts incredible personalities and character development and presents a story of humanity and humility as the Duke of York struggles with his stammer and the potential burden of the English crown. I rarely review films in this column and I'm sensitive about spoiling too much, but I am going to reference two brief scenes below entirely out of context; I hope that doesn't give much away.

One can only cringe in sympathy as Colin Firth stutters his way through his performance, playing off the indelible Geoffrey Rush. Helena Bonham Carter, perhaps known to many of you as Bellatrix Lestrange from Harry Potter, is flawless as the Duke's supportive and strong-willed wife. The couple conveys respect and love with mere hand touches and sideways glances, unlike in many other movies populating cinemas today. Equally impressive and poignant is the growing rapport between the Rush and Firth characters, commoner and royalty; they journey from the abyss of the 1930s British class system to the enlightenment of real friendship. "What are friends for?" Rush asks at one point, to which Firth reluctantly admits in a slightly halted fashion, "I … wouldn't … know."

Firth's eyes convey his character's most intense emotions as the times and the stammer restrain vocalization. There is always more going on than you see on screen; each interaction builds towards another development in his character's form. Early on in the film, after struggling through a bedtime story, he embraces daughters Elizabeth and Margaret tightly in a bear hug. Later on in the film, after returning from the coronation council, the girls stand side by side as he walks up to them: "Curtsy!" Elizabeth hisses to Margaret, who drops one foot behind the other. "Your Majesty," she says as she rises. There is such utter heartbreak and realization on the Duke's face and he reaches out and pulls them each in for a kiss; he won't continue in a cold royal upbringing for his children that so intimately defines his own existence.

The final scene belongs to Rush and Firth, and there's no need to describe it—it's a thrill of the greatest kind, not explosions, heists or zombies, but a true story of human perseverance. The lights come on and my mother turns to the elderly lady next to her; I don't hear what they are saying because I am looking for my coat and bag. Then I hear the old woman say, "I was there, I remember his speeches, he really was a figure of national resistance."

She lived in Britain and remembers listening to the wartime talks. The entire row, to her left unable at first and then unwilling to move, listens in rapt attention as she gathers her things. She speaks of Hitler, his brilliance and great power, and then asks, "Whom do you think won the war?"

I think it is a trick question. "Russia," she answers her own question, it was Hitler's bad decision to invade Russia that saved Britain. "We were defenseless at the time, we couldn't have stopped him if he decided to invade us, but he was stupid," she clarifies.

Then she recalls a vivid memory: "I heard cheering, and went outside; over the fence I could see a group of soldiers throwing their guns in the air and shouting. When I asked them what happened, they said the war was over."

People live history, every single day; September 11th was for my generation what John F. Kennedy's assassination was for my mother's generation. I'll always recall where I was when I heard about the Twin Towers—in sixty years, will I be watching a film related to the tragedy and turn to a young twenty-something-year-old and say: "I remember!" History is a living breathing entity for each person every day. "We knew he would get us through," the elderly woman in the Island Cinema remembers. I want to know if she could tell the king had a stammer. "Oh, we all knew he had a stammer," she affirms.

I love when history comes to life, and so often I feel as though the lessons are lost

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to the dull two-dimensional realities of textbooks or the inaccurate storytelling of Hollywood. Yet, how many people would know about this uplifting story had the movie industry not picked it up? I wonder what it's like, sixty years later, to watch a movie and be taken back to those terrifying days of your youth and the power and comfort of king and country? I will always fondly recall my ten minutes with the woman who was there and who remembers.

— Tarsi Dunlop

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Kathleen Bracken Given Literacy Award

Kathleen Bracken of Monterey has been presented the Berkshire Literacy Award for 2010. At the annual dinner of the Berkshire Reading Council, Kathleen, a Library Media Specialist with the Pittsfield School System, was lauded for exceptional effort and success in the creation and application of programs to motivate reading. Her creative contests and themes over a twelve-year tenure have resulted in enthusiastic participation by not only students but also faculty and parents. Building her programs on themes such as Chinese New Year, Iditarod Racing, hiking the Appalachian Trail, river kayaking, and others, students earned chances to win prizes and received recognition for achieving milestones. Mrs. Bracken contributed countless hours and more than a few dollars to develop the concepts, materials and tools for programs that were, almost without exception, original.

The Reading Council is presenting Kathleen's accomplishments for consideration for the Commonwealth Literacy Award, which would result in a national nomination.

January

the lilac bed
covered for the winter
ashes from maple embers
melting snow long after

three leaves of kale peek upward
in hope of spring's return.
the dog pees
on the garlic bed

another cold white witch
flying in to stay on the hill
we, huddled round the stove
knowing, yet not sure she will ever leave

orange peel floating in a steaming stove pot
butternut in the oven roasting
lemon in the tea
sweet pine from the one and only perfect tree

in morning the snow fell
white
soft
in utter silence

— Bob Hirsch

Christopher Blair
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Reclaiming Our Town's Constitutional Rights

The Town of Monterey is embroiled in a controversy about cell tower options, feeling pressure to amend current bylaws in response to a request for a permit. While some residents feel strongly that current bylaws provide appropriate restrictions, the Zoning Board is concerned about the 1996 Telecommunications Act ruling prohibiting a town from objecting to towers on environmental grounds. Rather than face a possible lawsuit, the board has drafted an amended bylaw that would provide compliant control to the town. What must not be overlooked is that the town has already been granted the ability to preserve its authority by the very same federal agency that introduced the 1996 Act. Despite the clause that preempts towns from objecting to towers, some towns are stepping up to the plate in their given task of preserving residents' well-being, challenging the ruling. Likewise, some state courts have decided in favor of the towns, ruling against cell providers who feel entitled to provide "adequate coverage" without objection. Just five years after the 1996 act, court decisions were slightly in favor of zoning authority over cell tower construction (34–30). Today more municipalities are demanding authority on the basis of the Telecommunications Act, which states that an industry's desires do not supersede a community's right to preserve its character.

Another argument some towns have raised to exert their authority in such cases is preservation of the "nondelegation doctrine." This congressional act allows the delegation of congressional oversight, but prohibits excessive legislative jurisdiction over areas where an agency has no expertise. While it is widely accepted that the FCC has taken liberties to define "environmental grounds" to include human health, interpreting the 1996 act in this manner violates the constitutionally based nondelegation doctrine, as the FCC itself admits, "The Commission does not have the expertise to make independent judgments on such alleged health effects.…This is the responsibility of federal health and safety agencies and qualified public health organizations" (Second Memorandum Opinion and Order, 12 F.C.C. Rcd. 13494 [1997]). Congress did not intend to give unconstitutional preemption authority over local health regulations to the FCC. Furthermore, the Supreme Court recognized that if such a power is exercised, it can only be done by a board with time exclusively given to the subject (J.W. Hampton, Jr. & Co. v. United States, 276 US 394, 408 [1928]). Since the FCC is not such a board, then the EPA is the authorized agency in such cases (42 U.S.C. s2021[h]).

Monterey residents have an opportunity to demand that the town maintain its zoning authority and work to protect the health and well being of its residents. Whatever bylaw the town votes to approve or amend must clearly spell out constitutional rights of the town governing body, ramifications of the 1996 act, and every reason a permit for cell tower construction may be reasonable denied.

Some court-approved reasons for objection include:

1. Cell towers may be inconsistent with the intended nature of the community, as Plainview, New York, residents stated when they petitioned against cell towers.

2. Cell tower construction may not be compatible with the development or comprehensive plan of the town, as the Planning Board in Topsham, Maine, decided.

3. Cell towers may not be in alignment with the appearance and fundamental use of the land, as the Planning Board in Colonie, New York, stated when a church applied for a permit to place a tower inside a bell tower.

4. Communities have the right to reasonable opposition and the right to oppose commercial structures, the reason that was upheld in the Eastern District Court

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of Virginia when the County Board of Supervisors in Fairfax, Virginia, opposed cell tower permits and ruled against one to be erected on a Masonic Lodge.

5. Cell towers could drastically reduce property values, a point made in a case in Allentown, Pennsylvania, when Sprint planned for a tower in Springfield Township. A real-estate expert predicted a loss of $50,000 for the nearest homeowners if the tower was approved.

6. Cell base stations create unwanted noise. While this reason has not yet been legally tested, Massachusetts Noise Regulation prohibits a company or its equipment from causing a pure tone noise. A noise restriction should be clearly stated in the bylaws. Recent research has concluded that cell tower base stations emit a power-control audible pure tone 217Hz frequency noise when communicating with wireless devices, including cell phones and wifi (Panagopoulous, et al, 2007, Electromagnetic Biology and Medicine, 26:1, 33-44; Oberto, et al, Radiat. Res. 168, 316-326, 2007). These studies speak about the noise as well as the biological effects of such radiation. This same pulsing pure tone has been found in Monterey. Measured at 25-35 db(A), it has been validated by an audio forensic engineer and is currently being investigated by the state.

Citing health concerns may not be popular with the FCC, but it is certainly a compelling argument, supported by numerous studies about risks of towers and radiation. Many are advocating a precautionary principle limiting tower construction until studies can conclusively prove a lack of health risks. There is also a swell of interest in pressuring the FCC to amend its standards and limits of allowable RF levels.

There are numerous empirically based studies on effects of cell tower radiation on living cells, animals, and plant life. Sage and Carpenter (*Pathophysiology* 603, 2009) reported on public health risks from cell tower radiation, including sleep disturbances, hormone and immune dysfunction, cognitive impairment, infertility, cancer and neurological diseases. There are researched health risks, including cancer, the closer one lives to a cell tower (M. Havas [Trent University], Expert Testimony on Health Effects Associated with Radio Frequency Radiation, Oct. 10, 2005).

Double strand DNA breaks in both humans and animals were reported after exposure to radiofrequency radiation (Singh, Lai, 1996, *Int J Radiat Biol*. 1996 Apr, 69[4]:513-21); Levitt, B & Lai, H. 2010. Environmental Reviews 18:369-395.)

A study of bees (N. Kumar, *Pune Mirror*, June 5, 2010) showed hives exposed to cellular radiation resulted in navigation and propagation changes in the bees. Bill Evans, Cornell Lab of Ornithology, studying massive bird deaths in Kansas in January 1990, concluded in his report (*Waveguide* archives, Feb 1998, 00:57:47) that the birds, mostly Lapland larkspurs, became disoriented, colliding with the wires of a 420-foot guyed communication tower and then flying directly into the ground. Another study following the effects of mobile phone masts on frogs (A. Balmori, *Electromagnetic Biology and Medicine*, June 2010, v. 29, n.1-2, 31–35) showed that eggs and tadpoles exposed to microwave radiation at 140 meters resulted in low coordination, poor growth, and high mortality (90 percent compared to 4.2 percent in control groups.)

These studies emphasize the importance of the crossroads we face. Whatever direction Monterey takes, should be with the intent to protect the safety of residents. The town boards are charged with that role above all else. Local government should not hand over its constitutionally based authority to a federal agency without an educated fight. It is time for us to seriously evaluate the course of action we are taking, the consequences of naïveté, and how we wish to move forward while protecting the best our community has to offer and the rights of its citizens.

— Laura Catullo & Sandra Chianfoni

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Remembering Thelma Field

Thelma Gayle Field, 77, of River Road in Monterey died Thursday, January 20, 2011, at Berkshire Medical Center in Pittsfield. Born October 8, 1933, in Bennington, VT, she attended local schools in the area.

A seamstress, Thelma worked at the former David's Hats in Housatonic. Over the years she also worked as a caregiver for many of the area's elderly.

She was an excellent homemaker who enjoyed working in the garden, raising goats, painting, and fishing.

Thelma is survived by her sons John W. Field of Monterey and Gerald Field of Pittsfield; her daughter, Linda Cronk, of Trenton, NC; and seven grandchildren: Sherry Lonanger, Terri Field, Jennifer Field, John Field, Jr., Veronica Powell, Joseph Cronk, and Steven Cronk. She also leaves nine great-grandchildren.

She was predeceased by her husband, Gerald Field, and her son Wayne Field.

In accordance with her wishes there will be no funeral services.

Those who wish may make memorial contributions to the Berkshire Taconic Fund/Denise Kaley Fund, which helps women with cancer in Berkshire County, through Finnerty & Stevens Funeral Home, 426 Main Street, Great Barrington, MA 01230. Remembrances, memories, and reflections may be sent to the family through www.finnertyandstevens.com.

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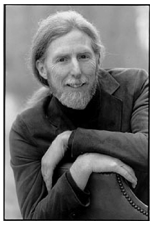

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Remembering Eleanor Wolfer

Eleanor Wolfer, age 81, of 46 Wahconah Heights in Pittsfield passed away on Wednesday, December 15, 2010, at Berkshire Medical Center with her sons and granddaughter by her side.

Born in Pittsfield on March 1, 1929, to the late Samuel and Julia Dean, Eleanor attended local schools and worked for Massini Bus Company in Great Barrington for many years as well as attending to the late Mrs. Dorothy Kay of North Egremont. Eleanor was also a longtime communicant of St. Charles Church. She loved cooking and spending time with her family and was always very fond of animals.

On July 11, 1958, she was married to Henry G Wolfer, who passed away in 2008. She leaves two sons, Robert Messer of Lee and Henry P. Wolfer of Monterey; two sisters, Florence Belot and Doris Hogan of Pittsfield; and one brother, Samuel Dean Jr., also of Pittsfield; as well as her granddaughter, Heather Messer of Lee. She was predeceased by her grandson, Brian Messer, who passed away in 1986; her sister Evelyn Maces, who passed away in 2005; and her brother Robert Dean Sr., who passed away one day before Eleanor on December 14th.

Her family would like to thank the nursing staff as well as Reverend Kaufman and Sister Colette at Berkshire Medical Center for their loving care and support through this difficult time.

Eleanor had requested that there be no services. Donations can be made to the St. Jude Children's Research Hospital in Eleanor's name.

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Remembering Larry Hopkins

Lawrence A. Hopkins, 78, of New Marlborough Road in Monterey passed away Wednesday, December 29, 2010, at his home following a courageous battle with a series of strokes. Born August 28, 1932 in Pittsfield, he was the son of the late Stephen and Ethel Squires Hopkins. He attended schools in Hartford, CT, before moving to Stockbridge.

In 1963 Larry joined the Local 98 Operating Engineers Union. He worked for the H .B. Smith Company in Westfield. Throughout the years he worked for various construction companies until 1995 when he retired from J. H. Maxymillian in Pittsfield. He co-owned Hopkins Builders with his son Larry. He was a member of Isaac Walton in Otis. He served as Fire Warden and Health Inspector for New Marlborough. Larry enjoyed fishing on Cape Cod, going to Saratoga, and spending time with his long time companion, Bonnie Farrell.

He is survived by his five children: Gary Hopkins and his wife, Linda; Karen Guinen and her husband, Kenny; Lori Jamross and her husband, Gary, all of Pittsfield; Linda Koening and her husband, Christopher of Summerville, SC; and Larry "Sparky" Hopkins and his girlfriend, Kathy, of Monterey. He also leaves three brothers, Stephen Hopkins and his wife, Beverly, of Granby, CT, John Hopkins and his wife, Debbie of Clayton, and Russell Hopkins and his wife, Holly, of Monterey; two sisters, Doris Santanngello of Hartford, CT, and June Signorelli of Georgia; ten grandchildren, ten great grandchildren, and his beloved dog Max. He was predeceased by his brother Douglas Hopkins and his sister Marion Lukas.

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Calendar

Every Monday except holidays: Select Board meeting, 7 pm, Town Hall.

Saturday, February 5: *Public Exposure: DNA, Democracy and the Wireless Revolution*, free documentary film on wireless technology health risks; 7:30 pm Meetinghouse basement. See p. 10.

Thursday, February 10: Free Blood Pressure Clinic with Berkshire Visiting Nurse Assoc., Town Hall Meeting Room, 2–3 pm.

Wednesday, February 16: Community Potluck Dinner, 6 pm, Monterey Meetinghouse Fellowship Hall. David Crowe will speak on tai chi and qi gong and lead some simple breathing exercises. See p. 7.

Saturday, February 19: Opening reception for Lewis Scheffey's exhibit, 7–9 pm, Monterey Library. See p. 15.

Monday, February 21:

Presidents' Day, Town Offices, Library closed.

Community Ice Skating Party, Firehouse Pavilion rink, 1–3 pm.

Saturday, February 26: Square and contra dancing, 8:30–11:30 pm, Dewey Hall, Rt. 7, Sheffield. Music by Mountain Laurel, caller Paul Rosenberg. All dances are taught; beginners and children are welcome. Adults $8–10, children $5. Information 528-9385.

Monday, February 28: Adult Book Discussion Group, 7:30 pm, Monterey Library. Book is *Little Bee*.

Saturday, March 5: Rabies Clinic for cats and dogs 1:00–2:30 pm, Monterey Fire Station. Fee $10.00 per shot.

Contributors

We thank the following folks for their recent contributions. Your support encourages us and makes it possible for us to continue publishing our community paper.

Dennis Sears
Jamie Moscowitz
Bonner McAllester & Joe Baker
Daniel Menaker
Gerry & David Shapiro
Judith Friedman

The Observer
December 26 – January 25

High temp. (1/2) ..... 53°
Low temp. (1/24) ..... -18°
Avg. high temp. ..... 26.1°
Avg. low temp. ..... 8.9°
Avg. temp. ..... 17.5°
Total precipitation
(rain and melted snow) ..... 4.45 in.
Snowfall ..... 71.5 in.
(Last year's total for season was 89 in.! Dec. 27th storwm total was 18.8 in.; Jan. 12th storm total was 27 in.)
Precipitation occurred on 22 days.

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Reporter..... Sue Protheroe
Mailing Labels ..... Joe Baker
Treasurer ..... Mari Enoch

Contributions from local artists this month:
Maureen Banner, p. 4, George Emmons, p. 16;
Tristian Goik, p. 5; Bonner McAllester, p. 14.

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